

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 071526Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3159

INFO USMISSION NATO

SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

USLO SACLANT

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

S E C R E T ROME 1809

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NATO IT

SUBJECT: US TARGETING STRATEGY

REF: USNATO 0639

1. IN FEBRUARY 7 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, CHIEF OF MFA
NATO OFFICE (DA RIN) EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT NPG STAFF
GROUP WOULDN NOT FOLLOW UP AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD'S PRESENTATION
ON THE MODIFICATION TO US STRATEGIC POLICY. DA RIN SAID THAT
THE GOI HAD FOUND AMBASSADOR RUMSFELD'S EXPOSITION MOST
USEFUL BUT FELT THAT THE NPG STAFF GROUP WAS THE LOGICAL FORUM
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FOR FURTHER CONSULTATIONS ON THE SUBJECT. HE NOTED THAT THE
DPC PERMREPS HAD IN MANY CASES NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE
EXPERTISE TO CARRY FORWARD THE CONSULTATIONS. AS FAR AS THE
NPG MINISTERIAL IS CONCERNED, DA RIN SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME

FURTHER DISCUSSION BY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER BUT THAT MOST EUROPEAN DEFENSE MINISTERS, TANASSI INCLUDED, SIMPLY WERE IN NO POSITION TO ENGAGE IN A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER ON THE SUBJECT. WHILE NATIONAL STAFFS COULD PREPARE POSITION PAPERS AND QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED AT THE NPG MINISTERIAL, DA RIN EMPHASIZED THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER IF THESE POSITION PAPERS AND QUESTIONS COULD BE VETTED IN ADVANCE BY AN EXPERT GROUP SUCH AS THE NPG STAFF GROUP.

2. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION AS TO ITALIAN REACTION TO THE SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE US PRESENTATION IN BRUSSELS, DA RIN SAID THERE WAS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE MODIFICATIONS TO THE US STRATEGIC POLICY WOULD HAVE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS AS FAR AS THE ALLIANCE IS CONCERNED. HE SINGLED OUT THE ADDED FLEXIBILITY IT WOULD GIVE TO THE CURRENT NATO STRATEGY.

3. IN REVIEWING THE BENEFITS TO THE ALLIANCE'S OVERALL STRATEGY, DA RIN RETURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE NEED FOR FURTHER CONSULTATIONS. HE OBSERVED THAT THE US MODIFICATIONS COULD NOT HELP BUT HAVE AN AFFECT ON MC 14/3. ELABORATING, DA RIN SAID THAT THE CURRENT NATO STRATEGY ENVISIONS THREE STAGES OF ESCALATION: DIRECT DEFENSE, DELIBERATE ESCALATION (WHICH ENVISAGES THE USE OF TACTICAL US WEAPONS), AND GENERAL STRATEGIC RESPONSE. THE CONCEPT OF PROVIDING THE OPTION OF JUST STRIKING MILITARY SITES WOULD SEEM TO INJECT A FOURTH STAGE, OR AT LEAST A MAJOR SUB-STAGE, INTO THE AGREED-UPON STRATEGY. THIS INNOVATION, ASSERTED DA RIN, IS SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT CLOSE EXAMINATION BY THE APPROPRIATE NATO BODY, I.E., THE NPG. AFTER REITERATING THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE US MODIFICATIONS, DA RIN INDICATED THAT THERE WAS ONE OTHER QUESTION THAT MIGHT ARISE IN THE MINDS OF SOME EUROPEANS AND THAT IS WHAT THE US RESPONSE WOULD BE TO A SOVIET ALL OUT NUCLEAR ATTACK ON WESTERN EUROPE ONLY. WHILE THIS, HE SAID, WAS VIRTUALLY IN THE REALM OF THE UNTHINKABLE, THE THOUGHT MIGHT OCCUR TO SOME THAT THE US
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RESPONSE IN SUCH A CONTINGENCY WOULD NOT BE THE ALL OUT NUCLEAR RESPONSE AGAINST BOTH MINITARY TARGETS AND CITIES ENVISIONED UNDER CURRENT NATO POLICY BUT RATHER A SELECTIVE RESPONSE AGAINST JUST MILITARY TARGETS. DA RIN SAID THIS SCENARIO, UNLIKELY THOUGH IT MAY BE, WAS ANOTHER REASON TO ASSUAGE POSSIBLE EUROPEAN CONCERNS THROUGH EXPERT DISCUSSIONS IN THE NPG.

4. COMMENT: DA RIN PREFACED HIS REMARKS ON THE MATTER OF RETARGETTING BY SAYING HE HAD BEEN FIGHTING A SEEMINGLY LOSING FIGHT FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO BREATHE MORE LIFE INTO THE DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES OF THE NPG STUDY GROUP. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR US CONCERNS OVER THE SENSITIVITY OF NUCLEAR SUBJECTS, BUT STRESSED THAT THE NPG SHOULD BE PROUD OF ITS RECORD OF SECRECY. WE WOULD WELCOME WASHINGTON GUIDANCE AS TO HOW WE MIGHT RESPOND IN THE FUTURE TO DA RIN'S ARGUMENTS FAVORING NPG CONSIDERATION OF THIS SUBJECT.VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY PLANS, NUCLEAR WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1974
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME01809
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P740146-0826
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740268/abbrzbky.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ROME
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: USNATO 0639
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <26-Jul-2001 by maustmc, RDFRD>; RELEASED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US TARGETING STRATEGY
TAGS: MARR, MNUC, IT, US, NATO, NPG, (DA RIN)
To: STATE INFO NATO
SECDEF
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
SACLANT
CINCLANT
ANKARA

ATHENS
BONN
BRUSSELS
COPENHAGEN
THE HAGUE
LISBON
LONDON
OSLO
OTTAWA
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005